

too much, money in the fund, so we can say we have done our job.

I want to thank the members of my administration for working hard on this issue. I want to thank the Governors in the affected States for being so compassionate in caring for their citizens. I want to thank the folks at the local level for loving a neighbor like they'd like to be loved themselves.

This Thursday, I'm going to take our team down there to meet with the folks in Iowa. And I, unfortunately, have been to too many disasters as President. But one thing I've always learned is that the American citizen can overcome these disasters. And life, while it may seem dim at this point in time, can always be better because of the resiliency and care of our citizens.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:21 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Agriculture Edward T. Schafer; R. David Paulison, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency; Gov. Chet Culver of Iowa; and James A. Nussle, Director, Office of Management and Budget.

### Remarks Following a Briefing on the Security Situation in Afghanistan

June 17, 2008

**The President.** It's been my privilege to have served with two really fine Americans, General Dan McNeill and Maureen McNeill. I've gotten to know the General well. He's a tough, no-nonsense patriot who was our commander in Afghanistan. I want to thank you very much for the briefing you just gave me about the issues that we face, your optimism about success.

I was telling the Secretary and the General, I just—about my trip to Europe, where I was pleased with the strong commitments of our allies to helping us succeed in Afghanistan. They know that what happens in Afghanistan matters to their own internal security.

They fully understand as well that helping young girls go to school and helping moms raise their babies in a—you know, in a better environment, helping rebuild this society

after years of tyranny is in all our interests. And it's also a moral duty we have.

And so I'm pleased, Mr. Secretary, that your hard work in working with the allies is paying off.

And, General, I know you're moving on, but the country thanks you for what you did. The world is better off because of your service. I'm proud to have you here.

**Gen. Dan K. McNeill.** Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President.** Yes, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Dan K. McNeill, USA, former Commander, NATO International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan, and his wife, Maureen; and Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

### Remarks at a Reception for Black Music Month

June 17, 2008

Thanks for coming. Please be seated. Thank you. Welcome to the White House. I really appreciate you coming to celebrate Black Music Month. Music has been a part of this house since its beginning. Some of our Presidents themselves were skilled musicians. Some were not. [Laughter] As a matter of fact, after the Temptations came here a couple of months ago, I was so inspired that I thought I would take up singing. [Laughter] Laura said, "You might just stick with practicing your speaking." [Laughter] So thanks for giving me a chance to do it today. And thanks for coming. We're going to have a pretty special day here at the White House.

I want to thank my friend Alphonso Jackson and Marcia. It's good to see you. Appreciate you being here.

Rod Paige, former Secretary of the Education, celebrating his 75th birthday today. Yes. You're looking good, Rodney.

Dr. Dorothy Height—honored you're here, Dr. Height. Proud to be with you. Roslyn Brock, vice chairman of the NAACP—Roslyn—yes, good to see you, Roslyn. Thanks for coming. Marc Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League—proud to have you here, Marc, thanks for coming.